

VZCZCXRO4251  
PP RUEHROV  
DE RUEHKH #1061/01 1241443  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
P 041443Z MAY 06  
FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2623  
INFO RUCNFUR/DARFUR COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 KHARTOUM 001061

SIPDIS

AIDAC  
SIPDIS

STATE FOR AF/SPG, PRM, AND ALSO PASS USAID/W  
USAID FOR DCHA SUDAN TEAM, AF/EA, DCHA  
NAIROBI FOR USAID/DCHA/OFDA, USAID/REDSO, AND FAS  
USMISSION UN ROME  
GENEVA FOR NKYLOH  
NAIROBI FOR SFO  
NSC FOR JMELINE, TSHORTLEY  
USUN FOR TMALY  
BRUSSELS FOR PLERNER

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [EAID](#) [PREF](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [SOCI](#) [KAWC](#) [SU](#)

SUBJECT: Sudan - Humanitarian Assessment of the Eastern  
Jebels, Nuba Mountains

-----  
Summary and Comment  
-----

¶1. A USAID team visited the eastern part of the Nuba Mountains from April 11 to 17, 2006, to monitor USAID-funded projects and assess local conditions for IDP returns. The eastern Jebels host approximately 60 percent of the population of the Nuba Mountains. Save the Children-U.S. (SC/US) is USAID's main implementing partner in the Nuba Mountains, and has operated in the area since 1994. The Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) arrived in Talodi locality and is currently building a returnee way station to facilitate local returns. The overall security situation in the area is calm. Roads are passable, though not all paths have been cleared of land mines.

¶2. Access to water is the overwhelming constraint to full reintegration of IDPs back into their home villages. Entire villages are forced to migrate during the dry season due to lack of water. USAID-sponsored programs are working to rehabilitate old wells, dig new wells, and provide livelihood opportunities for returnees and host communities. The U.N. World Food Program (WFP) has pre-positioned food stocks in the area to ensure continued food security after seasonal rains render local roads impassable. End Summary and Comment.

-----  
Background  
-----

¶3. A USAID assessment team consisting of a Health Advisor and an IDP Advisor visited the eastern part of the Nuba Mountains from April 11 to 17, 2006, in order to monitor USAID-funded activities and evaluate local humanitarian conditions. The eastern Jebels contains roughly 60 percent of the Nuba Mountain population and consist of three main localities: Rashad, Abu Jebeha, and Talodi. The USAID assessment team visited all three locations.

¶4. SC/US, USAID's largest partner in the Nuba Mountains, is implementing a broad-based humanitarian program including health, water, food security, and livelihoods

interventions. SC/US provides a variety of programs and services to the residents of Rashad, Abu Jebaha, and Talodi including a Family Tracking and Reunification program funded by the U.N. Children's Fund (UNICEF), mine risk education funded by the U.N. Mine Action Service (UNMAS), food security programs funded by the U.N. Common Humanitarian Fund (CHF), school feeding/emergency relief programs funded by WFP, and health, and water and sanitation programs funded by the Dutch government.

-----  
Reintegration and Reunification of Returns  
-----

15. As of March 2006, SC/US projects targeting returnees had assisted more than 20,000 beneficiaries. Of particular note, SC/US has successfully increased Expanded Program of Immunization (EPI) coverage from 14 to 98 percent, drilled and/or rehabilitated 256 hand pump wells, implemented 33 school feeding programs, and distributed improved seeds and other agricultural inputs throughout their area of operations. SC/US has also expanded its mine risk education program, initially funded by the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) in 2002, to support 72 villages. SC/US's Family Tracking and Reunification intervention resulted in eight children being reunited with their families. Although small in scale, these reunions represent important peace dividends and build confidence in the benefits of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) within local communities.

16. The Nuba Mountains are closer to northern Sudan and Khartoum than to Southern Sudan, and this relative geographical proximity has allowed IDPs living in

KHARTOUM 00001061 002 OF 002

Khartoum and other northern states to stay connected with relatives and family members. This continuity of relationships has contributed to a smoother return and reintegration process, with many IDPs undertaking advance visits in order to report their observations back to the larger Nuba community in Khartoum.

17. NRC opened a way station in Talodi in early April, 2006. The way station is located 2 kilometers from the town and features two water pumps, a clinic, a kitchen with cooking utensils, and plenty of shelter. The facility was designed to accommodate 540 people passing through Talodi en route to their home areas of origin. In a meeting with USAID, the Commissioner of Talodi expressed skepticism about the usefulness of the way station. In his opinion, resources would have been better used to build a school or clinic. However, he conceded that the structure could be transformed into a public service building following termination of the returns program. Given the relative ease of local returnee reintegration, the way station in Talodi is not a priority destination at this time. However, this situation may change during the approaching the rainy season, as vehicles loaded with returnees and their personal belongings will not be able to reach more remote villages in the area.

-----  
Huge Challenges Remain  
-----

18. Access to water continues to be one of the most critical challenges to survival in the eastern Jebels. Most of the places visited by the assessment team are experiencing severe water shortages. In some areas, families must spend half their day to secure 8 gallons of water. Villages surrounding the Abu Jebaha locality migrate into the town every summer to gain access to the areas scarce water resources. This seasonal migration in

search of water causes some schools to close and stresses local water infrastructure capacity to the breaking point. Though less severe than the urgent water crisis, shortages of health and education services also directly impact returnee welfare. The most common diseases observed in SC/US's few health service facilities are diarrhea, malaria, and acute respiratory infection.

19. Food assistance is a key component of local humanitarian interventions designed to assist both returnees and host populations. Food aid assists returnees and some host community residents to re-establish homes while also preparing for the upcoming agricultural season. WFP has successfully pre-positioned food stocks in the Nuba Mountains prior to impending seasonal rains, including 700 metric tons of food commodities in Talodi locality alone. SC/US, WFP's main distribution partner in the area, is storing additional food reserves in schools and commercial stores, and is constructing transitional storage facilities in several major villages throughout the area.

STEINFELD